

California 5 a Day Retail Program Advisory Board Meeting

California 5 a Day Plus Physical Activity—for Better Health! Campaign helps people understand that they should eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables and get 30 minutes of physical activity everyday because it is fun, it feels better and they'll live healthier, longer lives.

Retail Program Objective

To increase awareness of 5 A Day messages through outreach at the retail store level.

December 5, 2001

Meeting convened at 8:30 a.m.

Candice welcomed the attendees to the first Retail Program Advisory Meeting.

Attendees included:

1. Desiree Backman, Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section
2. Candice Blackmoore, Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section
3. Jean Dickinson, Hill and Knowlton
4. Sharon Eghigian, California Association of Food Banks
5. Sue Foerster, Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section
6. Marjorie Frank, California Pear Advisory Board
7. Hava Hajebi, Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section
8. Steve Junquerio, Save Mart
9. Don Harris, Safeway
10. Sharon McNerney, Nuffer, Smith, and Tucker
11. Lee Mercer, Second Harvest Food Bank
12. Ed Odron, Produce Marketing Services
13. Marie Ortega, Lawrence and Ponder
14. Dave Parker, California Tree Fruit Agreement
15. Claudia Ponder, Lawrence and Ponder
16. Barbara Wartman, Lawrence and Ponder

Candice and Hava explained the roles of the advisory board and what can be expected from each member:

What The 5 a Day Staff Can Expect from its Crew Members

- **Advise** us on campaign direction
- Provide **feedback**
- Help us seek **new opportunities**
- **Inform** us of potential roadblocks
- Be **our voice**
- Help us develop **our future**

What The Crew Members Can Expect from the 5 A Day Staff

- Offer **technical support**
- **Promotional** and **educational** materials
- Open, two-way **communication**
- Facilitate **partnership linkages**
- Source for **research** and **information**

Jean and Barbara briefed the group about the 5 A Day Branding Session held in Orange County October 4-5, 2001 by Lawrence & Ponder.

1. Explanation of where we are in the 5 A Day Campaign.
2. Overview of the Brand Essence process and the resulting “Inspiring Healthy Change” phrase, the touchstone theme resulting from staff focus groups at the Branding Session. It communicates the essence of what 5 A Day is trying to do.
3. Explanation of the need to create synergy among all 5 A Day campaigns to provide unity and strength in the state.

Jean and Barbara also presented 5 A Day consumer focus group results, which included the following highlights:

1. Participants view disease prevention and “better overall health” as important benefits of eating fruits and vegetables.
2. Common barriers to consumption include preparation time for vegetables, lack of availability of fruits during certain seasons and perceived poor taste or quality.
3. Involving children in meal preparation was mentioned as a way to overcome these barriers.
4. Consumers are receptive to grocery store strategies that encourage consumption through recipes, cooking demonstrations, pre-cut fruits and vegetables and improved quality and presentation of items.
5. For the Latino market, a focus on the *benefits* of fruit and vegetable consumption is recommended.
6. Address the cost barrier by educating the consumer about buying fruits and vegetables in season to save money. Consumers are largely unaware that they can save this way and need to be encouraged to buy when prices are at their lowest.
7. Informing consumers that canned, frozen, dried and juiced fruits and vegetables also meet 5 A Day criteria also should be included in educational efforts.

Candice and Hava followed up with plans for the Retail Program in 2002. A PowerPoint slide presentation provided at the meeting describes each course of action.

Sue shared plans from the *National 5 A Day Program*, highlighting efforts underway by the Produce for Better Health Foundation. This was followed by a discussion about the introduction of the Electronic Benefits Transfer system in 2002 and the desire for 5 A Day to become involved in implementation efforts to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

Candice and Hava then led the Navigation Session, which helps the staff ensure the course of action presented in the retail plan for 2002 can be implemented. The questions from the PowerPoint presentation are provided below.

Q: Is there a forum whereby store owners come together periodically? Would it be possible to attend and present CA 5 A Day?

A: Yes, both store managers and produce managers have association meetings, and they have had National 5 A Day present in the past. Their meeting calendar is not flexible, so try to get the calendar for the whole year and schedule months in advance. They usually have about a half-hour for presentations.

Q: How can we build stronger relationships at corporate level and store level with commodity boards and food banks?

A: Call. Also make personal visits. If “stuff” is just mailed, it often gets thrown away. Also form relationships with the smaller chains like IGA and the wholesalers like General Produce in Sacramento and OK Produce in Fresno. The wholesalers cover many stores, independents and chains, and generally don’t get much attention. Tom Chen in Sacramento is the head of General Produce.

Q: Would having our representatives visit the stores be helpful or invasive?

A: Personal visits receive more notice than mail or email or phone calls. We need to find out what the retailers are doing and try to coincide with their activities. Also let wholesalers and produce boards know if we have a schedule of promotions with certain retail chains, and they may want to join in.

Get corporate clearance in advance. Check on labor regulations regarding hanging materials, etc. Contact the corporate level cafeteria people. The cafeteria program is set up to easily promote the 5 A Day message, and starting there is a good way to get known at the corporate level. Posters also have greater impact in the cafeteria.

Also contact HR and Public Affairs officers. They are always looking for material to post and material to put in their newsletters. Get message to the checkers through HR. Checkers can make comments to customers.

Food banks need large quantities of brochures and nutrition information collateral. They pass out large amounts of commodities and like to include nutrition information with them. There are about 5,000 community agencies that receive commodities for distribution from the 65+ large food banks in the state. They would like a nice one-piece printed piece with nutrition information and produce care tips, food stamp information, etc, English on one side and Spanish on the other side. This would be easy to include with all of their distributions.

Pharmacies are another possibility to distribute information and to reinforce the 5 A Day message. Pharmacies would not be the focal point of the message; there is no profit incentive to their department to promote healthy eating.

Q: How do you suggest we effectively distribute 5 a Day materials to stores?

A: If material is sent directly to stores, it usually “gets lost” no matter what the size or advance notice is provided. The best way that they’ve had success with is sending it to the produce warehouse, and when it is received there, notify the store produce managers that a particular item will be arriving on a particular day, including instructions on how to use or display it. Then deliver it with the produce to the produce manager rather than through regular store channels.

Some large POS pieces might be difficult or costly to install, 5 a Day might consider paying for installation to increase participation.

Q: We are looking this year at reducing the number of sizes of POS, but adding the individual store names to the signage, how do you feel about that change?

Channel tracks are probably the type that will be used most readily because they can be put up at the same time as the price changes. Large pieces like banners take an act of God to get them installed.

Q: Should we be considering a method of giving the stores resources—internet, diskette, CD ROM—to print POS to their own specifications?

A: Some stores have the ability to print their own materials and would probably use them if the POS was pre-printed or automatically printed on the price signs. If they have to be printed separately, they would be less likely to be used.

Q: Would it work to give the stores monthly campaign highlights, i.e. “Lemon Month” with graphics and other resources. The stores could print to their own specs, add their own logos, etc?

A: It might work in some cases. “One shoe is not going to fit everybody, so there has to be options.” Be sure to find out from the retailer who should be contacted for follow up—art person? sign person? and find out if there is any help we can offer them to facilitate getting the signs out and up. We might want to start a large outreach program with just two or three large chains, and keep track of what worked and what didn’t work and get feedback before fine-tuning the program and then expanding to retailers statewide.

Independent stores will be much more anxious to take materials than the big chains, so flexibility and a variety of approaches will be the key. The independents can best be reached through the wholesalers.

Comments on the proposed new free-standing POS display and Monthly Event Kits:

- Some stores will not use it for sure because their policy is to keep the floor space clear. If it is two-sided, there are other places where only one side will be visible.
- If it is two-sided make sure that it is constructed and printed in such a way that either side can be used, that one side can be used and then turned around.
- If it is on wheels, the tendency may be to “roll it to the back room real quick” or for delivery persons to shove it out of their way. Some places it will work real well as a one-sided or two-sided display.
- Another problem that has been encountered is keeping the displays full. If we want to keep the displays replenished, we need to do it ourselves and not expect the produce guy to do it. Be sure to test the display for strength and how it will withstand the collision with shopping carts every day. Investigate placement to avoid as many collisions as possible.
- Perhaps a set of monthly event kits would be the way to go. The signage could be changed monthly. Commodity boards could become involved with seasonal promotions. The freestanding display concept seems like a workable possibility, but it is not likely that stores would be willing to share the cost.
- Information and buy-in should go through the corporate communication/information person as well as the produce department. We should give them a month lead-time and a year-in-advance promotion calendar so they can plan for it.

- Get things into a routine. Channel track signs work because the produce people are used to them and used to putting them up. If our promotions become a monthly routine, the produce staff will come to expect it and look for it.

Q: Would the chains be comfortable if they all were doing the same thing, having the same promotions?

A: Yes, a good example is National 5 A Day Week, all stores do something, but they may do different things. If we could involve National 5 A Day, it would help. We need to be aware of the established promotional themes: Dairy Month etc., and work with and build off of them. Ethnic emphasis months may not be as usable nationally as locally.

Q: Do you think voluntary participation “pull-marketing” would work for these monthly kits?

A: Probably not. PBH seems to be successful by continual contact with the retailers and wholesalers.

Q: What about a December kit?

A: Because of all the other December promotions, perhaps a general “Healthy Holidays” theme for November and December would work better.

Q: What about food demonstrations?

A: They love food demos. The problem is that they are expensive. Partnering might help to defray the costs as well as give the 5 A Day message access to other parts of the store. Like doing food demos near the Zip-loc bags, etc. But the partner product has to make sense. You can sell a lot of produce in a place where the customer doesn’t expect to find it. Expense for food demos is very high and the logistics are cumbersome.

It costs 25-35 cents per person reached for food demos. “Self-demos” (samples available—i.e. carrots and dip) in the produce department are becoming more difficult because of health and safety issues and the involvement of risk management, even though the products we demonstrate are very low risk for safety issues.

Q: Is there any way to get more mileage out of our effort and expense?

A: Casual demonstrating and speed sampling is sometimes an option—when the produce guy slices a fruit for shoppers to sample. This casual sampling could be connected to the monthly event calendar, samples of item being promoted, for instance. Also perhaps targeted to certain days of the week.

Research has shown that the low-income people tend more to shop on Saturdays and Sundays, especially Sunday afternoons. So in order to reach that group, Sunday afternoons would be an effective time for demos.

Q: What about working with food banks and store food donation programs? We’re looking to have the retailers or commodity boards provide some of the product for demos and also provide overage that would then be donated to food banks. There would be a display sign saying something like: “A portion of the product donated by XYZ Store for today’s demonstration will be donated to the ABC Food Bank.”

A: The national or regional offices make those decisions. The suggestion was made that we might somehow participate in the printing of bags with our message, to be used in the food disbursal programs.

Q: What about our CD-ROM?

A: A lot of stores do not have a CD ROM drive or Internet access and many of them do not have a printer with high enough resolution to print good graphics. However, having the CD ROM available is good for having access to logos, etc. for ads and newsletters, the CD can be given directly to the print house. The photos, nutrition facts, tips, etc could be used by the communications team to tie into the monthly promotions with the store newsletters, etc.

In-store audience scripts could also be included on the CD, though the store would probably “reinvent the wheel” and only use them as a starting point. They could be used over the inter-com for suggestions like: “It’s national 5 a Day week, come on over to the produce department and sample our fresh veggie salsa.” or “It’s national soup month, come to our produce kiosk and pick up a recipe for garden vegetable soup.” Everything on the CD-ROM should be on the web page.

Q: How can we integrate promotion of community activities into our programs?

A: Try emailing the information to the store manager in advance of the activity. You have to go through corporate first in order to get the local stores to participate. It can go from corporate to the District Manager who will pass it on to the local sites.

Q: What are your thoughts on our retail Web page?

A: Advertise the web page in retailer newsletters and magazines. Get links from commodity board sites, PBH, About Produce.com, the Department of Health, and the Department of Education, and as many retailers as possible. Put resources for teachers and interactive activities for children on the site and publicize to the schools.

Have to go through the corporate approval process for the stores to have access to our site. Most stores have their Internet access restricted. Physical access to the computers is also often a problem. It would be good to provide information on the site that is on our CD-ROM, and also position the site as an information source for people who don’t know about 5 a Day.

Q: How can we work with retailers to obtain information regarding trends produce sales as related to our promotions?

It would probably be better to take some exit surveys to see if people noticed the food demo or the promotional material, rather than trying to track sales of a particular item. We could look at overall sales for all produce pre-, during, and post-promotion; but there are so many other factors that influence the sales and trends, that the data might not be meaningful. Perhaps promotion and tracking sales of one single item would be possible.

Q: What do you think of the idea of “sentinel sites” throughout the state where we know there is going to be media, community, school, and retail activities going on, and we would collect data on a regular basis all year. We could extract information on the quantity and type of retail ads, community activities, etc. to have on-going trend information for the campaign?

A: The variables will affect the meaningfulness of the data. For instance, this year peach prices are up, so we may sell fewer peaches, but collect the same money. What the commodities have found that is useful to track is barren acreage—if more trees are being planted, then somebody is doing something right and selling some product.

Pounds sold could be a good indicator. But you must have clean data. For instance cantaloupe is sometimes sold by the unit and sometimes by the pound. Collection of that

data would be totaled as units sold, and the data would not be meaningful. Perhaps produce houses could track how much came through in a week—that would show quantity of supply, but not purchase or consumption.

But basic agriculture data will not help us find out if we are doing something right in Fresno. Data will need to be collected for a year before it is useful, and can then be compared to last years'. And tracking will need to be done over five years to show trends, and disregard the outlier year or season. Weather and other things that affect the crops will have to be included. It might be worthwhile to consult with some agencies regarding cost to gather data and in what format we can get the information.

Q: Is information about food stamp participation available to us at the store level?

A: The stores “own” this data according to the way the law is written. It isn’t likely that they would not share the information with us if we went through the proper channels. It would be to their benefit to try to increase food stamp use.

Q: We train media spokespeople. Are there any interested in this training?

A: If retailers are the spokespeople, it looks like they’re only trying to sell more products. If a 5 a Day representative is involved along with the store representative, it will look less like a commercial. Public Affairs officers should be involved and take the training to be able to answer questions about 5 a Day.

Candice: We would like the spokesperson training to be taken and have the persons report back at the next Retail Advisory meeting regarding the training and what they experienced. Camera skills, copy points, and advocacy are covered. The aim would be to work with TV and radio once or twice a year, or find another way to get free airtime—documentaries, news “fillers,” and news cooking segments.

ACTION: Steve and Don agreed to take the training. Once media trainings have been scheduled, Candice will contact volunteers.

Q: What do you think the role of the Retail Advisory Board should be regarding EBT?

A: EBT is a good way to track produce sales data. We need to develop a way to “incentivize” the purchase of produce—i.e., when the card is scanned, produce cost is reduced by half, etc. We need to develop protocol, and may need to visit each corporate office to gather information.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.